

ADAIR UPDATE



Matsushima:
A famous tourist
area near our
home

THE LAST TWO MONTHS

A quick summary of some of what we have been up to

Wow – 4 family members in less than 2 months! In late-September, both of our little sisters visited us. It was a full and fun time showing them off to our friends and showing off pieces of “our Japan” to them. Robert’s parents also visited us in October. A highlight was visiting friends of Robert’s from Kyushu (where he lived for 4 years) who recently moved to a city a few hours from us. Another highlight was eating shrimp gumbo that Robert’s mom made on his birthday.

In September we went to an A2-wide training in Tokyo on cross-cultural servanthood. Duane Elmer from Trinity Divinity School was the main speaker, and we learned a lot from him and from others at the conference. We talked about questions such as: How does mediation occur in Japan? How are broken relationships restored? What does hospitality look like? What builds and breaks trust in Japan? We have a lot to learn and process!

The young adult small group that meets in our home is plugging along. We’re studying Colossians, and it’s been good. Please pray for consistency and increased trust in the group.

We’ve met a few times with 2 couples from our church regarding a future church plant. We are aware of the tension between how much is going on right now and not wanting to wait until everything is perfect – we want to step out in faith. We also know we need to continue to get to know them better (as friends).

Regarding Japanese study, we both have things we’re starting – Robert with an online preaching course and Roberta with a new language partner.

A recent highlight involves a twice-a-month class for moms that I (Roberta) teach. This last week, I was able to talk with one of the ladies about a tough situation in her family, discuss the verse, “Jesus wept,” and pray with her. We are grateful for God’s presence with us and your prayers for us over the last 2 months.



This is ____.

- A) the entryway to our house.
- B) the gate into a shrine.
- C) a Japanese McDonald’s.
- D) where Roberta gets her hair cut.

Answer on page 2

IDOLATRY

What to do when kids are worshipping idols every day

On Tuesday, I arrived at the pre-school where I teach English a little early. On the window outside the apple room (fruit not computer), there was a big poster with the class's daily routine. There were the standard activities you would expect such as playing outside, practicing writing, singing songs etc...but there was another segment of the schedule that shocked me. The subtitle was "worship" with an explanation of how the children study Buddhist teaching and worship idols.

Our Pre-School

I am not sure if I have mentioned this before, but the school where I teach is associated with a Buddhist temple. Following the disaster our church developed a relationship with the school and helped them clean up their facilities. The building had been inundated by over 6 feet of water, and people were rescued by boat out of the second floor window. By the grace of God, the church was able to develop a strong relationship with teachers, families, and especially the principal. This relationship allowed us to start teaching regular English classes at the school.

We knew from the start that we would be teaching at a Buddhist school but were excited by the fact that the school allowed us to be there openly as Christians. We are free to invite our students to events at the church and invest in them relationally. A large number of the new faces in our church community have come from this connection including two families who visited our children's worship service.

Our Host Country's Religion

In Japan it is easy to forget how religious the daily lives of many Japanese people are. As I write this I am sitting in a coffee shop in a mall that you would not find odd at all. Most Japanese people only go to the temple or shrine on holidays or special occasions. The most regular religious practices centering around the family altar occur in the privacy of the home. Though most Japanese people would tell you that Japanese people are not religious, you can find evidence to the contrary in many places.

Our Reality

I was healthily shocked as I read the poster on the classroom wall about the religious practices of my students. We pray for them and share Jesus with them a few times a year as the opportunity arises, but every day they are bowing down to idols. The other day my ministry partner saw the children being told to greet the main idol at the school and show their respect in the same way they would talk to a person. Every day they are being taught to follow a faith that does not honor Jesus.

I am comforted and challenged by the words of the prophet Habakkuk: *"Of what value is an idol carved by a craftsman? Or an image that teaches lies? For the one who makes it trusts in his own creation; he makes idols that cannot speak. Woe to him who says to wood, 'Come to life!' Or to lifeless stone, 'Wake up!' Can it give guidance? It is covered with gold*



One of my students

and silver; there is no breath in it. The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him. " Habakkuk 2:18-20 (NIV). We serve a living God who is more powerful and worthy of praise than anything a man can create.

Our Role

On my first trip to Japan in 2001, I remember being shocked that people literally worshiped idols. In the west we usually think of idolatry in terms of materialism, but here in Japan people put their trust in images made by the hands of men. I don't claim to know the affect worshipping idols daily has on my students, but I know it is significant. It is an exciting and challenge minister in this spiritually dark place. Please pray that as we build relationships with the students, parents, and staff of the flower garden pre-school that we would know how to share the love of Christ with power and integrity.

Thanks for partnering with us in this,

-R&R

Partner

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Specific Prayer Points

- Japanese language acquisition
- Deepening friendship with Roba-no-kai (young adult small group) members and our potential future partners
- English students and Gospel choir friends to know Jesus
- A beach party on November 9th to conclude surf ministry for this season (for creativity in how to continue these relationships)
- Thanksgiving event for English families

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